
II. EVOLUTION OF THE LUMBER HERITAGE REGION

A. LHR - A PENNSYLVANIA HERITAGE PARK

Journeying through the Lumber Heritage Region, the ever-present forest stands out as one of the most striking features of the landscape. Woven into every trunk and limb are stories of lumber heritage, a culture defined by its forests. From the inception of the industrialized timber industry through the emergence of the current forest products industry, an indelible mark has been imprinted upon the culture of every community and every generation of the region.

The development of the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program has provided the region with a mechanism to link the pieces of its rich heritage and culture. The combination of resources throughout the region provides a foundation on which the story of industrial lumber history can be reconstructed. Through current and proposed interpretation, recreation, and economic development projects, these seemingly unrelated pieces of history will be woven into a mosaic that will foster a greater understanding of, and create new opportunities within, this forest region.

B. MEETING THE GOALS OF THE HERITAGE PARK PROGRAM

The goals of the Lumber Heritage Region match with those of the Pennsylvania Heritage Park Program. The overarching goal of the LHR involves defining and implementing a strategy that links grassroots projects related to lumber history. The LHR plans, through various implementation projects, to build partnerships with the contemporary forest products industry and other regional organizations (*Chapter V, Section E: Partnerships Implementation Strategy*); to focus on small-scale economic development (*Chapter V, Section D: Economic Development Implementation Strategy*); to work to preserve the culture based on the region's lumber history (*Chapter V, Section C: Historic Preservation/Cultural Conservation Implementation Strategy*); to promote and preserve the recreational activities and open space available within the region (*Chapter V, Section B: Outdoor Recreation Implementation Strategy*); and to unify and enhance the education and interpretation projects related to lumber history (*Chapter V, Section A: Education/Interpretation Implementation Strategy*). Each implementation project referred to in *Section V: Implementation Strategy* addresses at least one of these goals.

In addition to well-developed implementation projects, a State Heritage Park must have a viable resource base to prosper. The LHR has these resources, along with a management structure and organizational structure, that will anchor it for long-term growth and prosperity. The next section addressed these strengths.

C. RESOURCES, ORGANIZATION, AND MANAGEMENT

Extensive field views and historical data collection for the LHR Management Action Plan uncovered over 1800 historical resources related to lumbering, such as sawmills, CCC camps, logging railroads, tanneries, and rafting points. Locations of these resources are available in the *LHR Management Action Plan, Volume Two: Appendix, Appendix C*.

The five eras of lumber history - Pioneers of Logging, Spars and Sticks, Bark Peelers and Lumber Barons, Forest Conservation and the Recovery of a Resource, and A Second Forest and a Sustainable Approach - form the interpretive framework for the historic sites and structures throughout the region. In addition, although many small resources increase the resource base within the LHR, the region is fortunate to have a share of larger, well-established interpretive resources available. The Pennsylvania Lumber Museum, which interprets the story of lumber history from 1880 to 1910 in the lumber camp setting and from 1930 to 1940 during the existence of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), is one such invaluable resource. Along with this major interpretive venue, eight visitor centers, numerous historical societies, local history museums, and sites of major historical events, including the Austin Dam disaster, the Susquehanna Log Boom, and the Last Raft Journey are also available for the interpretation of lumber history.

The LHR boasts a number of outdoor recreational resources, adding to the visitor experience. Thirty-four State Parks, 69 State Game Lands, the entire Eastern Elk range within Pennsylvania, and plentiful multi-use trails and rail-trails blanket the LHR. State Forests and the Allegheny National Forest supply a more rugged outdoor experience for the adventurous LHR visitor.

Along with its rich resource base, the LHR organizational structure further strengthens its ability to become a vibrant heritage park. The organizational framework divides the LHR into three geographic subregions based upon watershed boundaries: Allegheny, West Branch, and Pine Creek. This organizational structure will allow visitors to experience the 15-county region through units more conducive to effective interpretation, which will encourage multi-day visits. Emphasis will be placed on interpreting and linking resources among all three subregions; however, the resident or visitor will find a smaller geographic expanse easier to explore during one extended visit. This structure also leaves the visitor with an eagerness to return to the region and complete a tour of the subregion, or to conquer the next subregion.

The efficacy of the LHR management structure also determines its success. The strength of the LHR management framework lies in its links to local needs. Each subregion will have an advisory committee whose job will be, along with LHR staff members, to develop projects in their subregions. The subregion committee would be composed of those who reside and work within the subregion, increasing its ability to stay in touch with grassroots efforts and local needs. Representatives from each subregion would be part of the Central Board, which ultimately decides on implementation projects. The Central Board, which also includes at-large members, allows the region to meet the needs of local initiatives while keeping regional goals in mind.

D. VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Over the next decade, the LHR will draw in hundreds of thousands of visitors, increasing small-scale economic growth for residents of the region. Visitors will channel into the LHR through one of the eight Gateways, replete with historic bed & breakfasts, full-service hotels housed in restored buildings or new buildings constructed using Pennsylvania forest products, and thriving restaurants that incorporate historic lumber photos, artifacts, contemporary forest products, and LHR promotional materials. Each Gateway will have a visitor center that coordinates LHR travel theme packages, including vacations focusing on historic lumber sites, golf courses, wildlife viewing, antique shopping, or bed and breakfasts, to name a few. The visitor centers will also provide LHR maps and resource guides, to assist visitors in planning their activities while traveling through the LHR.

As visitors stream through the region from the Gateways to the Key Destinations, LHR interpretive signs will serve as guides, interpretive kiosks will be placed at points of interest, and user-friendly maps will highlight historic sites along the drive. And for those who wish to get out of the car and hike, bike, or explore, a rail-to-trails system will be in place, linking important sites and explaining lumber-related history along the way.

Visitors at one of the many State Parks in the region will be provided with materials advising them of services and points of interest within the region. At Parker Dam State Park, for example, visitors would be directed to the historic Clearfield sites or the National Tom Mix Festival in Dubois. This type of outreach will tie State Park visitors to the surrounding communities, increasing appreciation of and business at little known treasures outside the State Parks.

In addition to increasing tourism to the region, interpretation of the LHR will help the region's residents increase their sense of place and pride in their community. An educational consortium will be developed, linking educators across the region and adding to the educational base relating to lumber heritage. As residents better understand their relationship to the forest around them, a strengthening sense of place will develop.

The Lumber Heritage Region will evolve into a place that instills pride within each of its residents. By building a strong sense of place and linking the small communities of the 15-county region, a foundation for the future is built, generating social and economic change. This, in itself, is a key outcome of the LHR.